



Instructional Technology Newsline

Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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◆ Section News, Updates, Initiatives

TLCF Funding Status

Many of you are anxiously awaiting a call from our section to announce final approval of 1999-2000 TLF projects. The TLF funding was included in the FY 2000 Federal Budget, which passed last week. In past years, it has taken several weeks for the appropriations to be finalized by the Department of Education and official notification issued to state education departments. This year, the President and the Congress also agreed to an across-the-board 3.8% cut for the budget. We have not heard how or if the cut will affect the TLF funding level or what that might mean to the timeframe for announcing the funding levels for Missouri. We expect to hear from the US Department of Education in the next few weeks concerning the amount of funding we will be awarded. As soon as the notification is received in the department, you will be notified and negotiations scheduled.

We know you are eager to begin your projects, and are concerned about the delays. Please be assured that supervisors will work with you during negotiations to make appropriate adjustments. Also keep in mind that this funding cycle does not end in June as does the state funding cycle. You will have until September 30 to complete your first year's activities. We feel comfortable that even with the shortened first year many beneficial activities can be conducted.

Consolidated Manual

Instructional Technology staff are developing a consolidated manual to address the VIDEO, Technology Acquisition, Competitive Technology, Interactive Television, and Technology Literacy Challenge Fund grant programs. Plans are to distribute the manuals in mid-to-late February and conduct statewide information workshops in April.

Web-based Applications

Staff from across the Division of Instruction have begun meeting with consultants to address how to automate or webify other programs and grant applications within the division. Based on what was learned from the Federal Programs and TLCF grant applications, we hope to be able to convert all of our technology programs. Much will depend on time, money, and programming resources. We may have to prioritize and automate the programs in phases. More detail will be forthcoming at the workshops in April.

State Approval of District Technology Plans

We have received numerous inquiries about when technology plans need to be re-approved by DESE. We began approving technology plans for the first time in December of 1997 so districts could participate in the Universal Services Fund's e-rate program. As required by the program, districts receiving educational discounts must have a long-range technology plan that is approved by the State Educational Agency. (Missouri non-public school technology plans are approved by the Missouri Council for American Private Education – MO-CAPE.) State approval is good for up to 3 years.

Because many districts submitted technology plans for approval that were half way through their planning cycles, technology advances so rapidly, and increased technology funding the past several years has helped districts to meet their goals more quickly than planned, we encourage districts to revisit their plans annually and develop new plans every three years. Instructional Technology will be sending a letter to superintendents later this month explaining that we will conduct another massive technology approval in April. Currently, we are re-examining the review process and criteria. As in the past, we will advise MO-CAPE of our plans and invite non-public school representatives to the reader training.

Please let us know by December 10 if you have any comments or suggestions about the approval process and/or criteria. Also, be thinking about whether you would like to volunteer to be a reader. We anticipate that we will accept technology plans March 20-31 and review the plans in mid April [we are still arranging accommodations].

Census of Technology

Thanks to all who participated in the 1999 Census of Technology (COT). Technology census data provide valuable statistics with which to chart progress toward Missouri's Education Technology goals and benchmarks; report our progress to the US Department of Education and Congress and the Missouri State Board of Education and General Assembly; validate programs, services, and funding requests; compare Missouri progress with other states and the nation; and, learn about best practices and where more attention is needed.

This was the third annual census and the first to be conducted online. With the help of the Office of Social and Economic Data Analysis (OSEDA), district administrators and technology staff were able to access the census forms online, find the forms pre-populated with data reported the previous year, and update data where necessary. Some of the findings from the 1999 COT include:

- 100% of districts and 95% of school buildings are connected to the internet
- 83% of school buildings have a direct internet connection internet (up from 68%)
- 74% of classroom are wired for the internet
- 176,150 computers are located in classrooms, with 140,286 of these computers internet capable and 98,682 connected to the internet
- 46% of classrooms have at least one computer connected to the internet
- overall ratio of students to computer dropped to 4.8 to 1 (down from 7 to 1 in 1997 and 6.4 to 1 in 1998)
- ratio of students to internet-connected computers dropped to 8.6 to 1 (down from 24 to 1 in 1997 and 14 to 1 in 1998)
- top faculty technology training priorities include
 - instructional delivery with instructional technology
 - integrating education technology into curriculum and assisting with curriculum development
- 50% of teachers and 62% of principals have intermediate technology skills; 51% of technology staff have advanced technology skills

Overall, 512 District Survey and 2185 (of 2250) Building Survey forms were completed. The state summary report and district level reports can be accessed at www.dese.state.mo.us/computingcensus/1999

◆ **The eMINTS Project**

During the school years of 1997-1998 and 1998-1999 MOREnet obtained funding from Southwestern Bell to initiate the Multimedia Interactive Networked Technologies (MINTs) Project. MINTs involves a high-speed internet connection to the classroom and places technology on the teacher's and students' desks while attempting to determine whether eliminating the technology barriers traditionally experienced by schools can change teaching styles and strategies and improve student performance. There were six St. Louis County school districts involved in the MINTs project: Affton, Bayless, Jennings, Normandy, Riverview Gardens and University City.

Test scores in the MINTs classrooms improved, but even more importantly attitudes and styles of teaching and learning changed also. The technology encouraged a new way of educating students – a way that engages them in their education by making resources available in a learning environment that fosters cooperation, collaboration, problem solving and higher order thinking skills. The connections to parents were also strengthened as parents showed more interest in the positive stories that their children were bringing home. The preliminary results of this program were so successful that it prompted the Commissioner of Education to launch a statewide initiative and change the way Missouri is thinking about educating its K-12 students. This new initiative is the *enhancing* Missouri's Instructional Networked Teaching Strategies (eMINTS) Project.

The eMINTS Project has two critical elements that are not typically found in new innovations that make this a promising project:

Professional Development and Support for Teachers: Schools have been selected with location in mind. Each teacher is part of a cluster of teachers who will have a Cluster Instructional Specialist (CIS) working with them. The CIS will be available for consultation, support, facilitation and assistance in designing inquiry-based instructional experiences. Technology sits

unused or underused in schools where there are no trained educators who can use the technology and integrate it into their curriculum and instruction. The teachers in this program will receive extensive professional development experiences throughout the project year that apply to infusing the technologies to support inquiry-based learning, in addition to the on-going support of the CIS.

Support: *eMINTS* classrooms will have internet connections to enhance students and educators learning experience. The rooms will have teacher stations, SmartBoards, a computer for every two students, related peripherals and minimal software. There will be ample technical support as well as the instructional support to ensure efficient operation of the classroom technologies and integration of the technologies into the curriculum.

eMINTS Project Facets: *eMINTS* involves 90 teachers in 45 school districts throughout Missouri. The schools are organized into nine regional Clusters representing all areas of the state. The *eMINTS* administrative team consists of a Director, Bill Giddings, at MOREnet; a Professional Development Team Lead, Delores "Dee" John, on loan to MOREnet from the University of Missouri-St. Louis; a Resource Development Team Lead, John Wedman, University of Missouri-Columbia; and, an Evaluation Team Lead, Bill Elder, OSEDA, UM System.

An *eMINTS* web site has been created in support of this project. Educators interested in learning more about the project and following the progress during the school year are encouraged to log on often for program updates. The URL is <http://emints.more.net/>

◆MOUS-Microsoft Office User Specialist

Missouri schools may soon have a MOUS in their school house--a Microsoft Office User Specialist that is. Through the *Missouri First Initiative*--a partnership among local schools, the State of Missouri, Microsoft and Nivo International--many districts have received vouchers which entitle teachers and students to take a Microsoft Office Users Specialist (MOUS) test. Tests are available for all of the 4 Microsoft programs (Word, Access, Excel and PowerPoint) included in the Office 97 or 2000 Office suite. Certification demonstrates that the test taker is proficient in definable set of skills in the program tested.

"By using MOUS certification exams for teachers, students and workers who choose to participate, we are preparing generations of residents for important work they will perform for companies in our state," states Missouri Lt. Governor Roger Wilson. "In addition, we will be able to offer businesses worldwide a well-trained, knowledgeable workforce as an incentive to operate in Missouri." Governors in six other states have expressed their support for launching MOUS initiatives.

In addition to the obvious tie to high school business and vocational curriculum, elementary and middle schools teachers, and teachers of all curricular areas should also look into MOUS certification. By being skilled in the various programs, teachers will be able to guide their students through formatting documents and presentations, adding graphics and utilizing data bases and spreadsheets.

For more information about the *Missouri First initiative*, please go to <http://www.dese.state.mo.us/mous/>

◆Learning With Technology

Featuring Stockton R-I and Farmington R-VII School Districts

Stockton R-I

Linking Our Students to the World

Imagine yourself as a student in the 1920s. What types of learning tools are available to enhance the curriculum being presented by the teacher? Chances are you have a piece of chalk and some type of a blackboard. Books were a luxury many rural, one-room schoolhouses did not possess. Now think about the present. Education has changed tremendously! The Stockton R-1 School District is not an exception. Through the efforts of teachers in all grade levels and the successful grant writers in the district, EVERY classroom in the district is connected to the LAN and the internet. Communication barriers have been overcome and students have every piece of information available at the touch of a button. Teachers in all grade levels are working together to enrich all areas of the students' education. Technology has been the key to the success of our projects. Students have become excited about the learning process all over again and the teachers have discovered technology is friendly and does make one's life easier.
www.stocktonr1.org

Farmington R-VII

Farmington teachers are "Exploring their Environment" through the use of the NASA Classroom of the Future project model (COTF) Project leader Bill Bratberg has been involved in a summer COTF program at the NASA Wheeling West Virginia site for the past two summers, and decided to bring the philosophy to his teachers. The TLCF grant project "Model Teacher Training Program to Develop Competency" brought COTF consultants, Farmington district curriculum specialists and Math and Language Arts teachers together to develop problem-based learning materials. All teachers in the project have learned how to utilize media rich learning tools and curriculum support materials. Two modules, "Catering Challenges" and Roller Coaster Mania" have been completed, and others are in the works, says Bratberg. You may learn more about the Farmington project at www.farmington.k12.mo.us/school/hs/departments. Click on the Curriculum support materials icon at the bottom of the page.

◆ Mark Your Calendar

December

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| 1-31 | TLCF Grant Negotiations with Instructional Technology Staff (Upon receipt of Federal Funding) |
| 13 | Video Advisory Committee Meeting
Jefferson Building, 14th Floor
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. |
| 15-17 | 1999 Regional Conferences on Improving America's Schools
Chicago, IL |
| 25 | Merry Christmas! |

January

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| 1 | Happy New Year! |
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February

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| 15 | Technology Manuals mailed to school districts |
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◆ Upcoming 2000 Conferences

January 27-28	Grants & Funding for School Technology Conference
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	New Orleans, LA www.eschoolnews.org/gf
February 22-24	Consortium on School Networking: K-12 School Networking Conference Lowe's L'Enfant Plaza Hotel, Washington, DC 202/466-6296 www.cosn.org
February 22-25	The 20th Annual Role of Technology in Education Conference St. Charles, IL 847/419-5065
February 28- March 2	Florida Educational Technology Conference (FETC) Orange County Convention Center, Orlando, FL 850/894-3810 FETC@netally.com; www.fetc.org
March 2-4	Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference Louisville, KY 502/564-7168 lsledge@kde.state.ky.us
March 13-15	Midwest Education and Technology Conference America's Center, St. Louis, MO 314/692-1250 christin@info.csd.org
March 30-31	The National School Technology Leadership Conference Austin, TX www.eschoolnews.org/stlc
June 26-28	National Educational Computing Conference "Connecting @ the Crossroads" Atlanta, GA www.neccsite.org

◆Monthly Grant Writing Tip

December - Have you done your grant writing homework since last month? If so, you should have now completed the rough drafts of four sections: Planning, Needs, Goal and Objectives, and Research. This month, Sheila Perry reminds her teachers to spend time going over research making sure what they have written makes sense, will not lose the reader, gives references, and matches the needs on the grant proposal. Cite research from journals, quotes, philosophies, expert opinions, model programs, internet, and grant project summary books which share your concerns and supports your ideas. This section is not a bibliography but a narrative that relates back to the needs and proposed project.

For January, work on your Introduction. This section is the “front door of the grant” or the first impression the reader gets of the grant. Be clear and concise about the instructional focus, who the target population includes, the expected outcomes for the project, and how the outcomes will be accomplished.

◆Internet Sites of Interest

Kerry Welch, Software Coordinator and third grade teacher at Republic Elementary, Republic R-III School District shares “Great Web Sites for Kids and Parents” in her “Mouse Tip News,” a

school newsletter. Check out the following web site suggestions:

Web sites for kids:

www.crayola.com

www.night.net/kids/

www.peg.apc.org/-balson/sch4.html

www.cp.duluth.mn.us%7Esarah/index.html

www.kidsdomain.com

www.4kids.com/kidshome.html

Web sites for parents:

Familyeducation.com

www.fathers.com

www.mommytimes.com/

www.momsonline.com/

www.safekids.org/

www.pta.org/index.stm